

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action that was mailed on February 24, 2005. Claims 1, 6-8, and 18-26 are amended to clarify that the present invention is concerned with a method for controlling manufacture of sheets. This amendment of the claims is based upon such disclosure as that appearing in the specification, in the last full paragraph on page 2 ("cutting X-ray film sheets from the whole film"), in the third paragraph on page 9 ("Figs. 4A and 4B are flow charts showing an example of a sorting operation of X-ray film sheets using film detection sensors."), in the description of Figure 1 in the last paragraph on page 9 ("processed into sheets having a predetermined size"), in the description of Figure 2 in the first full paragraph on page 13 ("collection trays 40 and 42 are used for collecting the X-ray film sheets 12 simultaneously at two locations"), and so on. This amendment does not change the scope of the claims, but simply renders their language more idiomatic. Compare for instance former claim 26 with claim 26 as amended.

26. (former) The method according to claim 18, wherein at least one of wrapping and packaging the collected sheet materials is carried out, the method further comprising the steps of counting a number of sorted sheet materials and the numbers of at least one of the wrapped and package[d] sheet materials, respectively, and comparing, at a predetermined timing, the number of sorted sheet materials and the number of the at least one of wrapped and packaged sheet materials.

26. (amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein at least one of wrapping and packaging the collected sheets is carried out, the method further comprising the steps of counting a number of sorted sheets and the numbers of at least one of the wrapped and packaged sheets, respectively, and comparing, at a predetermined timing, the number of sorted sheets and the number of the at least one of wrapped and packaged sheets sheet materials.

No new matter is introduced by this Amendment, and no new issues are raised thereby. Entry of this Amendment - in order to place the application into condition for allowance or into better condition for appeal - is respectfully solicited. Claims 1, 6-8, and 18-26 are pending in the application.

The Examiner has withdrawn claims 18-26 from consideration, citing 37 CFR 1.142(b) and MPEP 821.03. Both of those citations refer to restriction between inventions that are independent and distinct from one another. The Examiner has not shown that claims 18-26 are drawn to an invention that is independent and distinct from the invention covered by claims 1 and 6-8. The Examiner has not even required restriction between (I.) claims 1 and 6-8 and (II.) claims 18-26. It is also noted that the Examiner has not required an election of species in the present application. Accordingly Applicants respectfully submit that there is no basis to withhold claims 18-26 from consideration. It is pointed out that each of claims 18-26 depends, directly or indirectly, from claim 6.

Claims 1 and 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 7-49197. The reference in question corresponds to US 4,949,607 (Yuito).

THE INVENTION. The present invention manufactures sheets of material **that are cut into a predetermined size** (or processed products of those sheets) by processing the sheets or by performing predetermined operations on the processed sheets. In other words, in the present invention the sheets of material taken from the whole web of the material are firstly cut to the predetermined size, and thereafter the cut sheets - already having the predetermined size - are processed or subjected to predetermined operations at each of processing operations or processing sections.

YUITO. Yuito fails completely to teach or even suggest detection of passage of a cut sheet of material, which sheet has been cut into a predetermined size, by sheet detectors respectively disposed at entrance and exits sides of an operation section.

At the top of page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner argues "that long sheet which cut by via 16 similar to the claimed 'sheet material cut into a predetermined size'." The cutter in Yuito that produces sheets of a predetermined size is cutter 26. No basis is seen for the Examiner's allegation that the admittedly "long sheet" produced by cutter 16 in Yuito has a "predetermined size". In

fact, that "long sheet" is processed by Yuito at a reservoir 23 or a leveler 24, after which it is cut into predetermined lengths.

Also at the top of page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner argues alternatively that "the examiner believes that the claimed 'detecting passage of the sheet material' could be seen in Yuito [sic] as detecting the passage of the continuous web 10 which later cut into small sheets, which can be considered as the 'passage of the sheet material'." The Examiner refers in this argument to former claim language such as "detecting passage of the sheet material by sheet material detectors respectively disposed at entrance and exit sides of the operation section where the sheet material enters and exits the operation section". Such detection in the present invention is necessary because each sheet has already been cut into a predetermined size before the sheet is subjected to processing operations, unlike in Yuito where the sheet is cut by cutter 26 into a predetermined size only after it has passed through reservoir 23 and leveler 24. This differentiation between the present invention and the Yuito disclosure is clarified by the present form of the claim language in question: "detecting passage of the sheets by sheet detectors respectively disposed at entrance and exit sides of the operation section where the sheets enter and exit the operation section".

SUMMARY. The Examiner bases the rejection of record on his interpretation of "long sheet material cut by via 16" in Yuito as

corresponding to the sheets of predetermined size processed in the present invention. Those skilled in the art (including those of ordinary skill in the art) however, would consider the "long sheet material cut by via 16" of Yuito to correspond to the "sheet material" recited in the phrase "manufacture of a sheet material cut into sheets of predetermined size" in the present claims. In this invention, that "sheet material" (which corresponds to the long sheet material cut by cutter 16 in Yuito) is subsequently cut into the sheets of predetermined size in the present invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of claims 1, 6-8, and 18-26 is drawn to subject matter that is disclosed by JP 7-49197. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of record and to pass this application to Issue.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Richard Gallagher (Reg. No. 28,781) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional

fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly,
extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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